

Attorney Docket No. 33417/US

**REMARKS**

In the aforesigned Office communication, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6 as being indefinite under Section 112, rejected claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 under Section 102 as being anticipated by the patent to Jacobson et al., and rejected claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 under Section 102 as being anticipated by Jacobs. Claims 3-5 were also rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over Jacobson et al. Inasmuch as each of the claims originally filed with the application has been canceled herein, it is believed that all of the above-noted rejections of the application have been rendered moot. New claims 7-12 are not only felt to be patentably distinct from the prior art but should also be free of any indefiniteness under Section 112.

As will be appreciated from the specification of the present application, the carrier defined in the application includes two upwardly opening U-shaped channels (59, 61) with the first channel (59) receiving a first flange (23) of a first panel (1) and the second channel (61) receiving a second flange (37) of a second panel (1). The carriers shown in the prior art do not include two upwardly opening channels, each for the independent receipt of one flange of an adjacent panel. By way of example, neither of the patents to Jacobson nor Jacobs utilized in the original rejection of the claims of the application include a carrier with two distinct channels and the two channels are felt to provide an advantage over prior art systems.

While the examiner opined in the aforesigned Office communication that the locking lug (57) with a panel rim on either side thereof is functionally equivalent to having the panel rims (33, 45) secured on top of each other as in Jacobson and Jacobs, applicant does not concur. By positioning the panel rims on opposite sides of a

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separating locking lug, applicant is able to independently position each panel relative to the other and further, directional forces applied to one panel rim are not passed to the adjacent panel rim. Accordingly, should a panel become misaligned for whatever reason, the misalignment would not be transferred to the next adjacent panel due to the locking lug operatively separating the rims of the two adjacent panels.

Both Jacobson and Jacobs recognize the above problem with their systems and in order to remedy the problem, utilize additional materials to prevent the transfer of directional forces from one panel to the adjacent panel. For example, in Jacobson, wire clips 15 are utilized in such a way that the channel and the runner are tightly clamped (col. 3, lines 4-10). Subsequently, the panel is positioned with Kerf 10 over the lower flange (26) of the runner. Thus the panel rim is tightly held and any forces acting upon it during installation will not be a problem. Jacobs introduces additional connections (21, 22) between the panel rims which lock the panel rims securely to each other. Accordingly, the present invention includes a simplified system, namely the locking lug (57) for separating panels thereby alleviating the need for auxiliary components which not only increase the cost of the system but also the time involved in installation.

It is felt new claims 7-12 specifically set forth the above-noted distinction between the present invention and the prior art and for that reason the claims are felt to be patentably distinct.

Inasmuch as the new claims in the application are felt to be patentably distinct from the prior art and do not present any issues under Section 112, it is felt the application is in condition for allowance and such action is courteously requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

  
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GMP/dtc